

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Extension of Time

A request for a one month extension of the period for response to the office action mailed on February 9, 2007 is enclosed. The extended period for response expires on June 9, 2007.

Claim Status

Clams 1-10 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8 and 9 are amended.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Nakano (US 5,218,885) in view of Nilsson (US 5,203,854). In response, independent claim 1 is amended to clarify the invention and to clearly distinguish over Nakano and Nilsson. Claim 1, as amended, now recites (with reference characters added for ease of reference):

...a bearing bracket (12) made from iron alloy;

a bearing portion (11a') surrounding a journal portion of the crankshaft (8);

a bearing collar (12d) that is fit into the bearing bracket (12), is formed as a separate unit from the bearing portion (11a'), and holds the bearing portion (11a')...

wherein the bearing bracket (12) comprises a plurality of connecting boss portions (12c) extending toward the cylinder body (3) from the bearing portion (11a'), the plurality of connecting boss portions (12c) being situated on opposite sides of a cylinder axis (A) as viewed in a direction in which the crankshaft (8) extends...

Dependent claims 2, 4-6, 8 and 9 are amended for consistency with the amendments to independent claim 1.

The Examiner asserts that the drawing at page 2 of the Action, which is excerpted from FIG. 4 of Nakano, discloses the claimed invention. Applicant

strongly disagrees. Applicant's iron alloy bearing bracket 12, as recited in claim 1, also serves as the connecting boss portions 12c for connecting cylinder body 3 to crankcase 2. Moreover, in addition to iron alloy bearing bracket 12, claim 1 recites a bearing collar 12d fit into bracket 12 that is formed as a separate unit from and holds a bearing portion 11a' surrounding crankshaft 8. Thus, claim 1 requires three separate units: (1) an iron alloy bearing bracket (in which the connecting boss portions are formed); (2) a bearing portion surrounding the crankshaft; and (3) a bearing collar fit into the bearing bracket and holding the bearing portion.

Nakano fails to teach or suggest such a configuration. Nakano's FIG. 4 discloses a bearing 9 for supporting a crankshaft 8 that is press fit in a crankcase 2. There is nothing resembling applicant's claimed configuration. In particular, the portion of Nakano's structure that the Action identifies as a bearing collar is not fit into a bearing bracket, as required by claim 1. Moreover, the structure identifies as a connecting boss portion is formed as part of the structure identified as the bearing collar, and not as a part of a bearing bracket into which a bearing collar is fit, as is required by claim 1.

Thus, Nakano fails to teach or suggest the novel features of the claimed invention as recited in claim 1. Nilsson is directed to casting iron within aluminum and does not remedy the deficiencies of Nakano. Since Nakano and Nilsson do not disclose or suggest each and every element of claim 1, claim 1 and claims 2-10 dependent thereon are not obvious over Nakano and Nilsson.

Furthermore, claim 1 recites that the connecting boss portions (12c) are situated on opposite sides of a cylinder axis (A) as viewed in a direction in which the crankshaft (8) extends. In this regard, the "boss portion" shown at page 2 of the Action and Nakano's FIG. 4 is not viewed from the direction that a crankshaft extends. Nakano provides in FIG. 1 and 2, a view along the direction in which the crankshaft extends, but does not disclose the alleged boss portion. The cited FIG. 4 is a cross sectional view taken along the IV-IV line of FIG. 2, and is therefore irrelevant since it does not provide the proper perspective.

Appl. No. 10/501,380
Amdt. dated June 8, 2007
Reply to Office Action of February 9, 2007

Atty. Ref. 88528.0009
Customer No. 26021


For these reasons, the rejections under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

This application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues that remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: June 8, 2007

By: 
Trey M. Schmelzer
Registration No. 36,667
Attorney for Applicant(s)

1999 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 1400
Los Angeles, California 90067
Phone: 310-785-4600
Fax: 310-785-4601